A PROFITABLE SERMON PREACHED AT LINCOLNES-INNE, On GEN. XXII. XIV.

As it is ſaid to this day, In the mount of the LORD it ſhall be ſeene.

THE occaſion of theſe words, was that famous hyſtorie of *Abrahams* offering his Sonne *Iſaack*: now that ſo great a paſſage of Gods providence, and ſo great a tryall of *Abrahams* faith might not paſſe away, but be remembred, the Lord delivereth it in a proverbe,

The occaſion of the words.

As it is ſaid unto this day; becauſe wee are apt to forget, and proverbs are ſhort and pithy, and ſo the better remembred, and therefore the Lord ſetteth this marke upon it: whence by the way we obſerve, That ſpeciall paſſages of Gods providence ſhould not be forgotten.

Obſe v.

And therefore it is the manner of the Lord in ſuch paſſages of his providence, to make ſongs of them: and ſo hath it beene likewiſe the practice of the Lords people to turne ſuch things into ſongs, which they would not forget, as we ſee at the Red Sea, and in the time of *Debora*; and ſo did *Moſes*, when he would have ſome things to be remembred of the children of Iſrael, he left them a ſong: ſo did *David* likewiſe, who for the remembrance of the Lords goodneſſe, made many Pſalmes of thankſgiving.

Iudg. 5. Deut. 31. 19

Now a proverbe is much of the ſame nature, but it is ſhort, and makes a greater impreſſion, and therfore this great matter here ſet forth by it, is the diſpenſation of the Lords providence.

Two things obſervable in the Text.

Wherein note wee in the firſt place, That *the Lord will be ſeene*; why, what ſtrange thing is that? the Lord is ſeene every where of us, and makes himſelfe continually viſible unto us. I, but this is another kinde of ſight, which is not in a generall manner to bee beheld, but in his ſpeciall providence to his ſervants in their afflictions.

The ſecond thing is, The time when he will be ſeene; that is, *In the Mount*: that is, when things are brought to an extremity, when wethinke there is

is no more helpe nor hope, that is the time when the Lord will be seene.

Now the scope of this place is, to helpe us against discouragements, when wee see it goe hard with the Church that there is no hope for them, for then we are not to distrust, Because *in the mount will the Lord be seene*, in distresse will the Lord shew himselfe; and therefore you are to take heed of discouragements that you leave not your hope, for then you take away indevour, and so Gods causes fall to the ground, and thereby the Lord is forsaken of us; for it is our hope that sets all aworke, and the want of hope makes us turne our backes; yea, foyle and give over the Lords Battels; and therefore we should still maintaine our hope in all extremities whatsoever, for when the Lord sends any afflictions on the Church or our selves, wee ought not to despise or make light of them, because they are the messengers of the Lord, to humble us: so we must not on the other side have the sinewes of our soules loosened by them; for as we are not to despise the Chastening of the Lord, so are wee not to faint when wee are rebuked of him; for *in the Mount will the Lord be seene*: that is, it is a thing that the Lord will usually doe, not at this time when thou wouldest have him, but even when *Abraham* was fetching the blow, then to stay his hand: And it is his usuall course so to doe; and therefore it is turned into a proverbe, because it is ordinary.

The scope of the place against discouragements.

Secondly, we have ordinary use of it, and there-

For ordinary use.

fore likewiſe it is put into a proverbe; for the Lord uſually brings us into extremities; and that it might be the better remembred of us, it is put into a proverbe, for that is the uſe of ſhort ſentences to be eaſily carried in the memory; and therefore the Lord hath thus turned it: As men doe by their Silver, they change it into Gold that it may with the more eaſe be carried.

Simile.

Now to come to the words; out of which wee may learne, That *it is Gods uſuall manner to bring his children to extremities.* The examples are ſo many in Scriptures, and in our daily experience of this, that we need not inſiſt on the proofe of it, but proceed to ſhew the reaſons thereof.

Doct. 1.

Reaſ. 1. To make it an affliction.

And the firſt cauſe why the Lord doth ſo uſually doe it, is, When hee brings afflictions on his children, he lets it runne along till they may thinke there is no more helpe, nor hope, that ſo it may be an affliction to them; for it would not be an affliction, except it did runne on to the uttermoſt point; for if there were any doore for us to get out, wee were not compaſſed about; but when a man hath no gap to goe out at, that is it that makes the ſpirit of a man to ſinke. If a man were in a ſmoky houſe, and had a doore open, it were no difficulty for him to ſhift himſelfe out of it; but when wee are ſhut up, that is it which makes it difficult; and that it might be ſo, the Lord ſuffers it to come to an extremity.

Simile.

Reaſ. 2. Becauſe the Lord might be ſought unto.

Secondly, The Lord brings us to an extremity becauſe the Lord might be ſought to; for ſo long

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as the Creatures can doe us any good, we will goe no further; but when they faile us, wee are ready to looke up to the Lord. As it is with men which are on the Seas, when they are in an extremity, those that will not pray at any other time, will pray now, and bee ready to say with these in the Prophet *Hosea* 6. 1. *Come and let us returne unto the Lord; for he hath torne, and he will heale us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up*: and the reason is, because where the Creature ends, the Lord must beginne, otherwise there can bee no helpe at all. And hence it is that at the time of death, when a man once sees that, and hath no deliverance, it quaileth the stoutest spirits that are: as *Saul*, when hee could see nothing but death before him, then he sanke downe to the ground, and till then the Lord is not sought to; but *in their afflictions they will seeke mee*, saith the Lord; because then they can goe no where else. Therefore when a man is brought to say, vaine is the helpe of man, then he will looke to the Lord for his helpe; but till then, man is subject to looke round on every side to see if there bee any that will helpe: but when there is none, then he seekes unto the Lord and is delivered. *Simile.*

Thirdly, the Lord doth it, because that hereby it comes to passe that the Lord may be knowne to be the helper; that when wee are delivered, hee may have all the praise; for otherwise if there be but a little helpe in the Creature, wee are ready many times to ascribe it all to it, or at least to di-

Reas. 3 Because God may be known to be the helper.

vide the prayse; and therefore the Lord said to *Gideon, Judg. 7. 2. The people that are with thee, are too many:* though indeed they were but few in comparison of the multitude which they were to goe against, yet they were too many for *Gideon* to have acknowledged the hand of the Lord in it, if hee should have had the victory with them. But the Lord will not divide his glory with another, and therefore he will bring a man to the streight to be without all hope, that so hee may have all the praise; for when other meanes concurre with his helpe, then it is divided; but without that, his arme lyes naked, as it were; and therefore that it might bee knowne, hee brings them to extremitie.

Reas. 4. Because we might receive it as a new gift

Fourthly, the Lord doth it, because all that wee have, wee might have as a new gift: Therefore the Lord suffers us, as it were, to forfeit our Leases, that hee may renew them; otherwise we should thinke our selves to bee Free-holders. But when we come to see all gone, our health, wealth, and credit to faile us, and in that extremity the Lord to give it us, it is as a thing given on a new gift, and then we take our life as given againe of the Lord: and so in any other streight, when there is no helpe of man left, then wee take it wholly from the Lord; and then wee give it to him againe.

Reas. 5. Because wee may know the Lord.

Fifthly, The Lord doth it, because hee may teach us by Experience to know him.

Quest. But here some man will be ready to say, Why can-

cannot that be without theſe extremities?

To this I anſwer, You muſt know when a man goes on in a courſe, without any troubles, or changes, his experience is to no purpoſe; for hee hath no great experience of the Lord: But when a man is in tribulation, that brings experience; and experience, hope; for it is another kinde of experience that is ſo learned, than that which comes without it: and indeed nothing is well learned till it bee learned by experience. And therefore our Saviour Chriſt himſelfe that had all knowledge that could be had without this, would have this alſo of experience likewiſe; for when a man is in extremity, then ſhall hee have experience of the Lord. And therefore it is ſaid of *Manaſſes*, when hee was in affliction, and had prayed to the Lord, humbling himſelfe, and was reſtored, that *he knew the Lord was God*, 2 *Chron.* 33. 13. Why, did hee not know that before? No, not as now hee did; for now hee knew the Lord by experience: and the want of this is the cauſe why many feare not God; for, becauſe they have no changes, they know him not by experience, and therefore they feare him not. And for this cauſe, when the Lord did ever manifeſt himſelfe in any ſpeciall manner to any of his people, ye ſhall ſee it alwayes to be upon ſome great change that befell them: As when *Iacob* was forced to leave his fathers houſe, to flye from his brother *Eſau*, then did the Lord in a ſpeciall manner manifeſt himſelfe unto him; and ſo likewiſe at his returning home againe, when his

Anſw. God is never knowne well but by experience.

God manifeſteth himſelfe ever upon ſome great change.

his brother *Esau* came against him with foure hundred men to destroy him, which was a great change, then the Lord appeared to him againe: so still upon the great changes of his people doth the Lord appeare unto them; and as hee did to them in former dayes, so he doth to us now; hee doth appeare unto us sometimes by experience of his goodnesse; which that he may doe, he brings us to extremities.

Reas.6. Lastly, the Lord doth it for proofe and tryall, for so it is said in the beginning of this Chapter, *God did prove Abraham*; and therefore said unto him, *Take now thine onely Sonne Isaack, whom thou loveſt, and offer him up on one of the mountaines which I ſhall ſhew thee:* Now seeing the Lords intent was to prove him whether hee would part with his sonne *Isaack* for his sake, therefore he lets him goe to the very place and utmost period of offering his sonne; for if the Lord had taken this tryall of him before hee had brought him to the very utmost, he had not beene tryed; but when the knife was as it were going to the throat of his sonne, then was hee fully tryed: And like unto this doe we deale with friends one towards another; for when you will try how another will trust unto you, you will let him alone till there be none else to help; for if there be any other for him to go to, it is no tryall; but if it is come to this that you must doe it, or none will, then have you tryed him and not before: in like manner did the Lord prove *Abraham* in this place.

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The Uſe of it is, That we might learne never to be diſcouraged; whatſoever our caſe is, let us never ſuffer our hearts to be caſt downe in us; for as wee are very prone to let goe our hold upon all occaſions, ſo is it a very great fault ſo to doe. We ſee how *David* doth recollect himſelfe together when his ſoule was diſquieted within him, asking himſelfe why it was ſo? which hee would not have done, if the other had not beene a fault in him; and therefore why doe wee ſo caſt downe our ſoules? If we ſay, it is becauſe it will be long before the Lord will come and undertake our helpe: I anſwer, no, it will not; for as ſoone as he doth ſee thee fit for helpe, hee will give it; for when things are moſt deſperate, then his helpe is neareſt: for as he is able then to doe it, ſo is hee moſt willing to doe it then. And to this purpoſe is that place, *Hoſ.* 14.4,5,6. *I will heale their backeſliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from them. I will bee as the dew to Iſrael, he ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth his roots at Lebanon: his branches ſhall ſpread, his beauty ſhall be as this Olive, and his ſmell as Lebanon.* When Iſrael was fallen into a very low condition, and had taken to him words, and repented of their ſinnes, then the Lord healed their back-ſliding which was the cauſe of their miſery: and then though they were outwardly miſerable, yet hee will be as the dew unto them; that though they be as the Lillies in winter which hath neither colour, ſcent, nor beauty, yet conſider in the ſpring time

Vſes.
Not to be diſcouraged what ever our caſe be.

Pſal. 43 5.

Obiect.

Anſw.

Hoſea 14.4, 5,6, opened.

what I doe unto them, and learne to know me by the workes of nature; for if I doe but ſend a little dew, ſuch as is in the time of ſpring, it ſhall grow againe, yea and bring forth ſuch a flower, whoſe beauty ſhall exceed *Salomon* in all his Royalty: and if the Lord can doe ſo in nature to the hearbs of the field, doe you not thinke he is able to doe it to you in the ordinary paſſages of his providence? If hee ſhall but ſhine on you with the light of his Countenance, yea though you were as the Lilly in the Winter, yet ſhall you ſpring againe as the Lilly in the Spring: that is, you ſhall ſpring quickly. But you will ſay, and quickly wither againe: No, ſaith the Lord, you ſhall be confirmed and eſtabliſhed in your eſtate, for he will faſten your roots as the trees of Lebanon, and they were faſter than the trees in other places; for though they be tall, and ſo their boughes might be moved, yet the bodies of the trees hold their owne, becauſe they were well rooted: and in Lebanon they were faſter than in other places, becauſe it was a firmer ground: ſo that if the Lord liſt to plant you, you ſhall be ſure to remaine firme. But what ſhall I be good for? I know not how to be uſefull neither for God nor man, but to bee laid aſide as a thing for which there is no more uſe. Nay, ſaith the Lord, I will not onely make you beautifull as the Lillies, and rooted as the Cedars, but I will make you as the Olive trees which are fit for uſe. And put the caſe thy name and credit be loſt, yet your ſmell ſhall be as the ſmell of Lebanon, that

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is, as Lebanon had many ſweet bloſſoms and ſweet ſmels, ſo ſhall it be with you, whatſoever your condition be.

This place then is a place of comfort againſt diſcouragements, which you may ſee exemplified in divers examples: As in the example of *Iob*: you know in what a caſe hee was, hee loſt all he had, that he had not a friend left him; no, not his wife nor ſervants that would ſticke unto him, but was brought to the very Mount, to an extremity that could not goe further, for he was at the very brim of the hill: yet when *Iob* was fit for mercy, when he had humbled himſelfe, you ſee what a change the Lord made, how his beauty did returne againe, and how all his health, proſperity, and friends did returne unto him, inſomuch as he was in all things as before, yea and beyond it. So in the fourth of *Daniel* 26. who would have thought it poſſible for *Nebuchadnezzar* ever to have beene reſtored, that had loſt his kingdome and wits too, which is the onely meanes to bring a man in againe; yea, hee had loſt all his beauty, for hee was a beaſt of the field, yet the Lord made a change with him: now a man would wonder how this ſhould be brought to paſſe that he ſhould have his kingdome againe, and be made knowne to his Nobles; why the Text ſaith, *Hee looked up to heauen, verſ.* 34. and then his Nobles and Princes ſought unto him: for the diſpoſition of all people is to have the right heire to rule the kingdome; and therefore he had as much glory and honour as ever before. The

Examples.

Iob.

Nebuchadnezzar.

he Iewes in *Mordecayes* time.

like you ſhall ſee in *Mordecayes* time, when the Church was in extremity; for you ſee how farre *Haman* went, the blow was as it were in the giving, the knife was in his hand to cut the throat of the whole Church of the Jewes, yet when they had humbled themſelves by faſting and prayer to the Lord, that made worke in heaven; and when there was a change in heaven, you ſee how quickly the Church was changed, and brought even from the loweſt degree to the higheſt that could be, or ever was in the time of their trials. And therefore let us never give over our hopes, and deſpaire not, for becauſe the Lord is ever ready to ſhew mercy, for mercy pleaſeth him: A man when he corrects his childe, he doth it unwillingly; but when he is fit for mercy, he is glad to ſhew that: why ſo it is with the Lord, he being willing to doe it, and exceeding able, for hee is a Phyſician that is able to heale the moſt dangerous diſeaſes, and ſhall wee then doubt of the accompliſhment? It is a common fault amongſt us to meaſure the Lord according to our ſelves; and ſo when we ſee man cannot helpe us, we thinke that God cannot; but he that can turne Winter into a Summer, can ſpeedily turne our eſtates when we are fit for it: As a Phyſician that adminiſters hard potions to his Patient, it is not becauſe he cannot or will not give him pleaſant things, but it is becauſe his Patient is not fit for it; for as ſoone as hee is fit for Cordials, hee moſt willingly gives them unto him: And as the Husbandman, hee is willing enough to ſowe his ſeed

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

ſeed in the earth, and would bee glad if the time were come; I but hee knoweth if hee ſowe it on the wilde waſte ground it would be loſt, and therfore he plowes it firſt, and againe too, yea thrice if it be needfull, and then having well fitted it, hee ſowes his ſeed: Even ſo it is with the Lord, hee firſt plowes the ground, he digges deepe into the hearts of men if it be needfull ſo to doe, but if a little plowing will ſerve, he never takes a deeper; and if one will ſerve, hee never gives a ſecond; and therefore when we are fit to receive the ſeed, mercy ſhall come in amaine amongſt us, even as that which goes with wind and tide; yea, it ſhall come as faſt as our miſery did, which though it comes headlong upon us as it did upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, yet how quickly did the Lord deliver him againe? and ſo ſhall it bee with us, becauſe the Lord is delighted with mercy, therefore the Lord doth uſually helpe in extremities, and not before; for *in the Mount will the Lord be ſeene.*

And as the firſt Doctrine is drawne naturally from theſe words, That *it is Gods uſuall manner to bring his children into the Mount*; ſo in the ſecond place, then and there will he be ſeene: Therefore it followes, That

In the time of extremities will the Lord be ſeene, and not before: But then he will appeare in his ſpeciall providence, for the comfort of his Children, thogh not before.

Doctr. 2. Reaſons why God will not be ſeene till extremities are.

And why ſo? Firſt, becauſe the Lord knowes this is the beſt way to draw forth the practice of

I To exerciſe the graces of your God by

many graces, and good duties, which otherwiſe would be without uſe: As for example; When *Iacob* had made his brother *Eſau* his enemy by his haſty getting of the bleſſing, whereas if hee had ſtayd the Lords time, he might have had it without any ſorrowes with it; but becauſe he will have it a wrong way, it is accompanied with many ſorrowes both in him and *Rebecca* likewiſe: Now if the Lord had preſently made reconciliation betwixt him and his brother, as he could have done, though he did not, but made it long firſt, that made *Iacob* exceeding fruitfull; for hee being cauſed to to flye, as his mother counſelled him to doe, in his neceſſity became acquainted with the Lord, and knew him better than ever otherwiſe hee ſhould have knowne him: yea, he knew himſelfe better too, and therefore vowed to give the Lord the tenth of all that he had, and that the Lord ſhould be his God for ever if hee would give him Food and Clothing, of which he felt the want at that time; and this brought his heart to the Lord: So likewiſe when *Eſau* came againſt him at his returning home againe; if at the firſt it had beene told *Iacob* that his brother had beene friends with him, he had never wreſtled with the Lord as hee did; and ſo ſhould he have miſſed of that great bleſſing which he received in being called *Iſrael*. And therefore wee ſee the Lord by this doth draw many great fruits from them, of which otherwiſe the Lord ſhould loſe the glory, and wee the benefit, if it were not ſo with us. So likewiſe the

Angel

Angell was ſent to *Daniel* when he began to pray: but if the meſſage had then beene delivered to him, his heart had not beene ſo well moulded in the frame of grace, therefore the Lord lets him alone; though he had given the Angell charge to deliver the meſſage to him, yet till he had done his worke, and was made fit for it, the meſſage of their full deliverance was not made knowne unto him.

Reaſ. 3. To give time of repentance

A ſecond reaſon why the Lord deferres, and will ſtay till the very extremity comes, is, Becauſe he would give a time to men to repent and meet him in, which is good for his Children, otherwiſe we would not ſeeke unto the Lord: and for ſuch as doe not ſeeke him, it is to leave them without excuſe: as in *Chron.* 11, 12, Chapters, you ſhall finde that *Roboam* ſought the Lord for three yeares together, and then departed from him, yet *Shiſacke* was not ſent againſt him till the fifth yeare of his reigne. Whence this is to be obſerved, that though he had forſaken the Lord, who therefore had reſolved to bring judgement upon him, yet he gives him two yeares liberty to ſee if he would returne. So when *Nebuchadnezzar* was like a flouriſhing tree, when he had dreamed his dreame, and that made knowne unto him, that he ſhould be cut downe to the very root, like the lilly in winter, nothing ſhould be left but the ſtumpes, yet you ſhall finde it twelve moneths after before the Lord ſtrucke him. So in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by *Nebuchadnezzar*, the Lord was oftentimes

times offering to ſtrike it, yet called backe his hand again that they might humble themſelves and ſeeke his face: but as it is ſaid of *Iezabel* in the ſecond of the *Revelations*, *verſ.* 12. *he gave her time to repent, but ſhe repented not.*

Reaſ. 3. To let us know the vanity of the creature.

Thirdly, the Lord doth not deliver till the time of extremity, that we may know the vanity of the creature. And ſee that they are but as reeds that are empty: as for example, when a man is brought to ſome great ſtreight, and ſees that men will forſake him in it, as the Lord will cauſe them to doe when he will bring a man to a ſtreight indeed, for then he will ſhew him that there is no helpe in man; as when a man that is ſicke, and ſo farre gone that no phyſicke will doe him good, but all Phyſicians have left him; or when a man hath ſome great buſineſſe in hand, and nothing that he hath will effect it; and ſo likewiſe a man at Sea, when hee is in ſuch a tempeſt that neither rowing nor any thing elſe will doe him good, then when men are in ſuch caſes, they come to ſee the vanity of the creature, and that all outward meanes will ſtart aſide like a broken bow; for a broken bow being drawne but a little, will hold; but if it bee drawne up to the head, then it breakes in the hand of him that handles it: Even ſo, when the creature is put to it, then the vanity of them is ſeene, and that they are but as hollow reeds that are empty, and ſo not bee truſted to.

Simile.

Though God defer till extremity, yet then he will ſurely helpe.

Now we muſt adde to this, that as the Lord will not deliver till then, yet then he will doe it; and

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of that you muſt make no doubt, becauſe the Lord will make good his promiſes and bee juſt, for he is abundant in truth, hee will make good all that he hath ſaid, and that in abundance. Now if the Lord will helpe, and yet not till a man come to extremity, why then hee muſt helpe or not at all, and ſo he ſhould faile them that truſt unto him, when as one man will not faile another that truſteth him, for that were treachery ſo to doe; why then much leſſe will the Lord faile thee, if thou rely upon him, if thy heart can tell thee thou doſt intirely reſt upon him, it is impoſſible hee ſhould faile thee: And therefore he muſt helpe thee at the laſt caſt, or elſe not at all; and untill thou art ſo farre gone, thou art not come unto the Mount; for *Abraham* was three dayes in going the journey, and the Lord might have revealed it before if hee would, but hee did not till he came to the mount: And therefore doe not ſay, now is the extremity, and yet the Lord doth not helpe mee, when thou art but in the way, for thou art not yet come to the brow of the hill, thou art not at the utmoſt part of the Mount.

Vſe. To teach us not to make too much haſt for deliverance.

The Vſe of it is, to teach us not to make too much haſte for deliverance in the time of diſtreſſe, but to wait upon the Lord, yea, depend upon his providence when wee ſeeme to be without helpe: If we looke upon the Creature, yet then are wee to depend upon the Lord, ſo as never to ſay there is no helpe; but on the contrary, to ſay, *I will truſt in him though he kill me*; for ſo did *Abraham* here,

he was to kill his Sonne, and yet he had hope: So let us, though there were a thing that would bee our utter undoing if it ſhould come on us, yet if it doe come thou oughteſt to hope, becauſe it is the Lords manner to bring his people to extremities, as here to *Abraham*: and the like hee did to *Peter* when he came to him on the waters; for he might have holpen him before he beganne to ſinke if he would, but hee did firſt let him ſinke a little, and then he holpe him: So when the people were at the Red Sea, and had no gap to goe out at, then the Lord holpe them, by making a way thorow the Sea: In like manner he did to *Iacob* when he was returning home from his father in law *Laban*, hee ſuffered *Eſau* to come out againſt him with foure hundred men, before hee holpe him; and who would have thought that *Eſau's* mind ſhould have beene ſo ſuddenly turned? But when *Iacob* was brought to a ſtreight, then the Lord turned all another way. And the like he did with *David* in the time of his diſtreſſe, he let him alone till *the waters were like to goe over him*: but when his feet had almoſt ſlipt, in regard of his outward and inward troubles, for he was at the very *going downe to the grave*, then the Lord brought his feet out of the Ner, and ſet him at liberty, and tooke him out of the waters that he was not drowned: and therefore ſtill truſt in the Lord, and labour that thy faith faile thee not whatſoever thy ſtreights be; for that was *Peters* fault when hee was on the water; for if hee had ſunke, being hee had the

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Lords word, hee ſhould have beene ſafe enough, and therefore had no cauſe to doubt; and ſo wee ſhould learne to doe, in all our ſtreights ſtill to beleeve; which if we doe, we ſhall finde the Lord very exceeding ready to helpe beyond all that wee can be able to aske or thinke.

See this in an example or two, how the Lord comes betwixt the cup and the lip as it were, betwixt the very lifting up of the hand to the ſtroke; and as in the Text, ſo alſo when the *Shunamite* had by the command of the Prophet left her land, becauſe of the Famine that was to come when the ſeven yeares were done; for ſhee truſted the Prophet, and therefore did not ſay, Alas, what ſhall I doe for my lands againe? but did goe; and when ſhee returned, and was gone to the King for her lands againe, at that very inſtant was the King talking with *Eliſhaes* ſervant about the great workes of the Prophet, who then told the King of this woman and her ſonne, confirming that which *Gehezi* had ſaid, and *Gehezi* being preſent to helpe to ſpeake for the woman; and then ſhee had not onely her lands reſtored her, but the fruits of it alſo for the whole time of her abſence. So likewiſe when *Mordecayes* deſtruction was plotted by *Haman*, and ſo neare brought to paſſe, that there could bee no hope of helpe on any ſide, yet then when *Mordecay* was aſleepe in the night, and had made no plots at all for his ſafety, then the Lord brought it to paſſe, for *that night the King could not ſleepe*; then hee muſt needs call for a booke, and

then that above all other bookes, that ſhould bee brought, and in that booke that very place to be turned to of the treaſen againſt the King, and *Mordecayes* truth and faithfulneſſe in diſcovering the ſame; and that this ſhould be done at the very extremity, when a day or two after would have done him no good, it is worth the conſidering: therefore never doubt, feare not, but truſt to the Lord in any ſtreight; for though hee doth not worke miracles now, yet he works wonders, and is able to doe as great things as ever he was, yea, and doth ſo too when there is the like occaſion: In like manner, when our Saviour Chriſt was brought to the very brow of the hill by the people to be caſt downe from it, why then hee went a way thorow the midſt of them; ſo is the Lord able to doe with us, and will alſo if there be the like need; and therefore let us learne to truſt in the Lord, and in all things to depend upon him. One would have thought it impoſſible when forty men had ſecretly vowed neither to eat nor drinke till they had killed *Paul*, for that to bee revealed, and *Paul* to be delivered, when ſo many that were able enough to deſtroy a poore priſoner had conſpired againſt him, yet we ſee the Lord delivered him from that great ſtreight; and therefore let us wait ſtill upon the Lord, for it is but the ſtaying til the time be our, and then he that can ſave, will ſave, and will not tarry. And ſo much for the ſecond thing.

The laſt point obſervable from theſe words, is, That

That *godly mens extremities are but tryals, ſent for their good; and not puniſhments ſent for their hurt and ruine.*

Doct. 3. Godly mens extremities are trials, not puniſhments.

The Lord did this but to prove *Abraham*, hee meant him no hurt at all in it: And ſo the Lord doth by afflicting others of his owne people, hee doth not meane to hurt them by it. And therefore when you ſee an affliction to be ſo great as if it would undoe thoſe on whom it is, yet you ſhall ſee in the iſſue it was but like an evill; for when *Abraham* was bid to take his onely Sonne *Iſaacke* whom he loved, and offer him in a Sacrifice to the Lord, and was ſuffered to be the three dayes in the tryall, yet the Lord meant him no hurt; here was indeed a great apprehenſion of evill, yet it was no evill; but it might as much worke upon him as the evill it ſelfe: Even ſo it is with us in our afflictions, they are not evils, but meere tryals, and therefore we are not much to be diſmayed for the greateſt afflictions that can befall us in the world, becauſe they are but trials, that doe befall thee from God.

Obiect. *Anſw.*

I, but will ſome ſay, what ſhall I get by it? Why, ſo much that there is ſo little cauſe to bee ſorry for it, that thou haſt cauſe to rejoyce, if thou wouldeſt beleeve; as it is ſaid in the firſt of *Iames* 2. *My Brethren, count it great ioy when you fall into divers trials*: It is a very fit Text for the purpoſe, for the Lord ſaid hee would prove *Abraham*; and all is no more but to try us, and not to doe us any hurt: and this is a good reaſon

why it is ſo, in that wee are bid to rejoyce in it; now we have no cauſe to rejoyce in that which wil hurt us, neither will the Lord lay any unreaſonable command upon us.

Obiect. *Anſw.*

I, but what if the tryals bee many? Yet hee bids us rejoyce, though they be of divers kindes; when wee are not onely afflicted in the loſſe of goods, and our friends forſake us, in which wee might have ſome comfort, if our healths and liberty might bee enjoyed; or if all the outward man were afflicted, yet if the ſpirit were whole it would beare out infirmitie. I, but what if that bee wounded too? Why, if there bee tryals of all ſorts, and you fall into them all, and that of a ſudden too, as a fall of waves, one comming upon the necke of another as they did upon *Iob*, yet wee are bid to rejoyce: Why one would thinke it were enough for a man to bee patient in that caſe, yet (ſaith the Apoſtle) *you muſt reioyce in it; yea, count it exceeding ioy*: that is, as your trials are greater, ſo let your joy be greater.

Obiect. *Anſw.* We ought to reioyce in tryals, becauſe the greater the tryall is, the more will be the good.

Why, that is a ſtrange command you will ſay: I but though you ſee not the reaſon of Gods Commandements, yet there is a great reaſon in them, which if you ſaw, you would keepe them moſt willingly. And the reaſon of this Command is, the greater the tryall is, the more will bee the good, and therefore the more cauſe of joy; for if the moſt painefull bee the moſt gainefull, then they that have them, have the greateſt cauſe to rejoyce in them: It was a tryall for *Abraham* to

to goe from his owne land, and to caſt out his ſonne *Iſmael*: I but this was the greateſt, and this brought him the greateſt fruit that ever hee had.

I, but what is that good? Why this; firſt, it ſhall increaſe grace in your hearts; for as the gold when it is tryed loſeth nothing but droſſe, and ſo is made the better thereby; ſo it is with our afflictions, for *the tryall of our faith*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *bringeth forth patience*: for the greater thy tryall is, the more it ſtrengthens thy faith, and ſo increaſeth comfort: for when the afflictions of the Apoſtle abounded, his Conſolation abounded alſo. And hence it is that our Saviour Chriſt ſaith, *You ſhall receive an hundred fold with perſecutions*; that is, when the tryall doth abound, the comfort ſhall abound.

Obiect.
Anſw.
The good that comes of tryals, is,
1. Increaſe of grace,

Againe, you ſhall have the greater wages, for when a man hath a friend that hath beene employed about any great thing for him, why the greater the trouble was which hee did undergoe for him, the more will hee bee beholding to him, and the greater reward will he beſtow upon him; even ſo, the greater the tryals are from the Lord, the greater benefit will come to us by them; and therefore when you ſee the greateſt tryals befall the Church and people of God, bee aſſured by this which hath beene ſaid, that ſome great benefit is comming to them; for doe you not thinke this is a uſefull doctrine; it may bee it concernes ſome

2. Increaſe of reward,

ſome of you now at this preſent; if not, it may doe, and therefore lay it up before-hand; and let us not thinke of our afflictions as of things that will undoe us, but as tryals that will bring us profit. For as the Spyes that went to *Canaan*, were of two ſorts, and looked upon the Gyants that were in it with a double eye; and ſo ſome of them ſaid, O the land is a very good land, and incouraged the people to goe up into it; and others that were afraid, they ſaid, nay but the land eats up the Inhabitants thereof, and diſcouraged the people to goe up into it: Even ſo it is with many amongſt us, when they ſee afflictions befall the Church and people of God, O they preſently are afraid, and therefore they ſay, Who would bee as theſe men? let me be of ſuch as be in proſperity and have friends, and ſome that will provide for mee: but what is the reaſon of this? why they ſend forth wrong ſpies, and therefore they bring backe a falſe report: but if thou wouldeſt ſend forth thy faith and ſpirituall wiſdome which ought to be in thy heart, then thou ſhouldeſt ſee it were no ſuch matter. And therefore let this be our practice concerning the eſtate and condition of the Church at this time, and needfull it is wee ſhould ſo doe; for doe you not ſee the dangers that they and we are in, and the confuſion that is almoſt throughout all *Europe*? yet God hath not forgotten us, neither will he leave us, if wee can but reſt upon him: what though there ſhould be a

ſudden

ſudden change, ſo that all things were with us as it was in *Heſters* time? yet could the Lord bring forth ſome good thing out of it that ſhould tend much to his glory and our good: Put the caſe all were turned upſide downe, as it was in the confuſed Chaos, wherein heaven and earth was mingled together, and the waters overcomming all the reſt, yet as then when the ſpirit of the Lord did but move upon the waters, many beautifull creatures were brought forth, and the Sea divided from the reſt, that thoſe waters that ſeemed then to ſpoyle all, ſerves now to water all, and without it we cannot be: Even ſo, were the Church in never ſo confuſed a condition, yet the Lord ſhall ſo order the things that ſeeme to undoe us, that they ſhall bring forth ſomething of ſpeciall uſe; that is, ſomething to water and make fruitfull the houſe and people of God: and therefore be not out of hope whatſoever befalls thee, onely bee humbled; for there is great cauſe ſo to be, and the Lord calls thee to it by his Miniſters, and wee are his meſſengers to declare his will unto you; and as we muſt bee humbled and take to heart the cauſe of the Church, ſo wee muſt conſider the time, that wee may bee throughly affected thereby; for it was *Ephraims* fault not to doe it: and thou muſt ſee this diſtreſſe, ſo as it may bring thee into the Mount; for it is not an extremity ſimply that will cauſe the Lord to helpe thee; but when thy ſoule is plowed up therewith, and then the Lord will caſt in the

Simile.

seed and water it, so as thy soule shall spring againe; and therefore let us still maintaine our hope in all conditions whatsoever. And for this end did I fall upon this Text at this time, That *in the Mount will the Lord be seene.*

FINIS.